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ABSTRACT

Noting that Maria Montessori pioneered early childhood education (ECE) reform in Italy, and the surge in innovation in ECE after WWII, this videotape describes the early childhood system in the city of Pistoia, Italy, known for its high-quality and innovative services. The 30-minute video offers footage from 2 of the 9 full-day infant toddler centers in Pistoia, introducing teachers, children, and families from these centers. Footage is also featured from 1 of the 16 schools offering full-day services for 3- to 6-year-olds. Noting the city's system of laboratories established to increase services to children of all ages, the video also features a center offering twice-weekly morning toddler nursery care, a laboratory where preschool children explore and express themselves through art and use creatively unusual materials, and another laboratory offering storytelling and puppetry programs to preschoolers in the mornings and school-aged children in the afternoon. The footage shows physical environments, teachers' ideas about working with children across a range of abilities, and use of materials and community resources. Throughout, the video emphasizes how the Pistoia system of early childhood education offers affection for children, opportunities to explore the cultural offerings of the city, continuity of care, interaction with families, and professional support and development for teachers. Included with the video is a brief viewers' guide with suggested questions and topics for discussion and reflection. (HTH)

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